

The *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code* (780 CMR), consists of both a basic building code (the *Massachusetts Basic Building Code*) and a stand-alone one-and two-family dwelling code (the *Massachusetts One- and Two-Family Dwelling Code*).

The technical content of the *Massachusetts Basic Building Code* is based on the 2003 International Code Council® (ICC®) *International Building Code*. The technical content of the *Massachusetts One-and Two-family Dwelling Code* is based on the 2003 ICC *International Residential Code*. Extensive technical changes have been made as a result of reviews by the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety (the Department), Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) and technical advisory committees, and also as required by Massachusetts General Laws and specialized Codes and Regulations.



# SEVENTH EDITION, MASSACHUSETTS BUILDING CODE FOR ONE- AND TWO-FAMILY DWELLINGS (780 CMR)

## FOREWORD

The *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code* (780 CMR) consists of two volumes; one volume addressing all building uses except one- and two-family detached dwellings and a second volume addressing only one- and two-family dwellings.

The *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Basic Building Code* (780 CMR) volume addressing all building uses except one- and two-family detached buildings is based on the ICC 2003 *International Building Code* (IBC-2003) with significant Massachusetts modifications.

The *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* (780 CMR) volume addressing only one- and two-family detached buildings is based on the ICC 2003 *International Residential Code* (IRC-2003) with significant Massachusetts modifications.

The chapters of the two-volume building code set are numbered consecutively from 1 to 120, with chapters 1-50 being dedicated to that volume of the building code addressing all building uses except one- and two-family detached buildings and Chapters 51-99 dedicated to that code volume addressing only one- and two-family detached dwellings.

Chapter 100 and Regulations 110.R1 through 110.R-6 (Chapter 110) and Appendices 120.A through 120.Z (Chapter 120) are shared with both volumes of the *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code* (780 CMR).

Chapter 100 is the Referenced Standards chapter; Regulations 110.R-1 through 110.R7 address, with modification, the same subjects as the *Sixth Edition, Massachusetts State Building Code* address in its Regulations Section (R- 1 through R-6). Appendices 120.A through 120.Z address, with modification, most subjects addressed in the *Sixth Edition, Massachusetts State Building Code* (most of the Sixth Edition Appendices A-K, redefined alphabetically) but with additional appendices acquired as a result of utilizing the ICC IBC and IRC as the bases for the *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code* (780 CMR).

Where Massachusetts requirements are different than requirements of the baseline IBC-2003 and IRC-2003, every effort has been made to identify such differences using ***bold and italicized print*** or in the case of entire chapters unique to Massachusetts simply so identifying such at the beginning of the chapter, but because Massachusetts does not just adopt unaltered versions of the IBC and the IRC the reader is cautioned to always utilize the *Massachusetts State Building Code* when designing and constructing/reconstructing buildings and structures in Massachusetts.

The *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code* (780 CMR), being a two-volume code, will be implemented in stages, with the *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* (780 CMR), being implemented first.

As the *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Basic Building Code* (780 CMR) volume addressing all building uses except one- and two-family uses is in final development as of August 1, 2006, the Building Code for all building uses except one- and two-family detached buildings will remain the *Sixth Edition, Massachusetts State Building Code* until further notice.

In recognition of the time periods involved in the planning, design and construction of buildings and building-related projects, and in order to effect an orderly and equitable transition between the sixth and the seventh editions, the State Board of Building Regulations and Standards will implement a policy regarding continued use of the current *Sixth Edition, Massachusetts State Building Code* while the new *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* (780 CMR) is also implemented (please refer to the Department of Public Safety/Board of Building Regulations and Standards web page for such guidance—[www.mass.gov/DPS](http://www.mass.gov/DPS)).

## PURCHASING

The Secretary of the Commonwealth is the “legal keeper of the record” for all Codes of Massachusetts Regulation (CMRs) and court-certifiable versions of CMRs can only be obtained through the Secretary of the Commonwealth. As such, the Massachusetts Building Code may be purchased by visiting the State House Bookstore located in the State House building in Boston, Massachusetts or by calling the bookstore at 617-727-2834 (to order online, also see <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/> and select “Statehouse Bookstore/Publications and Regulations”).

**AMENDMENT PROCESS**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 143, § 97, 780 CMR is subject to change by amendment. Amendments shall be proposed on forms made available at the Department of Public Safety and also found in Appendix 120.P of the *Seventh Edition, Massachusetts Building Code* (780 CMR).

Proposals are presented at a public hearing where the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) hears testimony both for and against such proposals. Ultimately, when the BBRS adopts a proposal such adopted amendments to 780 CMR become effective when promulgated and first appear published in the bi-weekly *MASSACHUSETTS REGISTER*, issued by the Secretary of the Commonwealth (Publications and Regulations Division).

All proposals for amendment to 780 CMR must be received at least 60 days prior to the public hearing date. Changes that are voted approved are issued on a cycle determined by the BBRS.

The BBRS is mandated by law to convene public hearings to entertain changes to the code a minimum of twice each calendar year: in May and November. Other public hearings may be scheduled as necessary.

Anyone wishing to present a code change should contact the Department of Public Safety/Board of Building Regulations and Standards at:

One Ashburton Place, Room 1301  
Boston, MA 02108

It is the responsibility of the code user to check the *MASSACHUSETTS REGISTER* to determine if amendments have been issued against 780 CMR or any other Construction Code (Electrical, Plumbing and Gas, Fire, Architectural Access, Elevator, etc.) of the Commonwealth.

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## PREFACE

### Introduction

Internationally, code officials recognize the need for a modern, up-to-date residential construction code addressing the design and construction of one- and two-family dwellings. The *Massachusetts Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings* is designed to meet these needs through model code regulations that safeguard the public health and safety and consider dwelling affordability in all communities, large and small.

This comprehensive, stand-alone residential construction code, based on the ICC IRC-2003, has been modified to reflect requirements of the State of Massachusetts, and otherwise incorporates approved changes from the 1999 code development cycle, establishes minimum regulations for one- and two-family dwellings using prescriptive provisions.

### Development

On April 22, 1996, the ICC Board of Directors established the ICC/NAHB Task Force, charged with the examination of performance options of the CABO *One and Two Family Dwelling Code*. The Board further stated that the “purpose is to identify the issues (including the process of code development after 1998) and develop an action plan to resolve the issues.”

Subsequently, the ICC/NAHB Task Force recommended to the ICC Board that the “ICC develop and maintain a stand-alone residential code that will cover the construction of detached one- and two-family dwellings and multiple single-family dwellings (i.e., townhouses) not more than three stories in height with separate means of egress. This code is to be called the *International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings*”. (NOTE: the Massachusetts variant of the IRC does not address multiple single family dwellings. Regulations for such are found in the *sixth edition of the Massachusetts State Building Code*, and ultimately will be found in the *seventh edition of the Massachusetts Basic Building Code* when available.

A code drafting committee was formed by the International Code Council. The intent of the code drafting committee was to develop a draft of a comprehensive residential code that is consistent with and inclusive of the scope and content of the existing model building codes and the *International One- and Two-Family Dwelling Code*.

The technical content of the 1998 *International One- and Two-Family Dwelling Code*, the other *International Codes* (including the *International Building Code/First Draft*) and the latest building codes promulgated by BOCA, ICBO and SB CCI was the nucleus for the development of this document. Other sources of relevant technical information were also considered. While there were a great many similarities among the codes, careful consideration was given to identified differences. The code drafting committee used certain principles as guidance in the resolution of technical differences. The principles were based on the intent to establish provisions consistent with the scope of a residential code that adequately protects public health, safety and welfare; provisions that do not unnecessarily increase construction costs; provisions that do not restrict the use of new materials, products or methods of construction; and provisions that do not give preferential treatment to particular types or classes of materials, products or methods of construction.

### Maintenance

The *Massachusetts Building Code for One- and Two-family Dwellings* is kept up to date through the review of proposed changes submitted by code enforcement officials, industry representatives, design professionals and other interested parties.